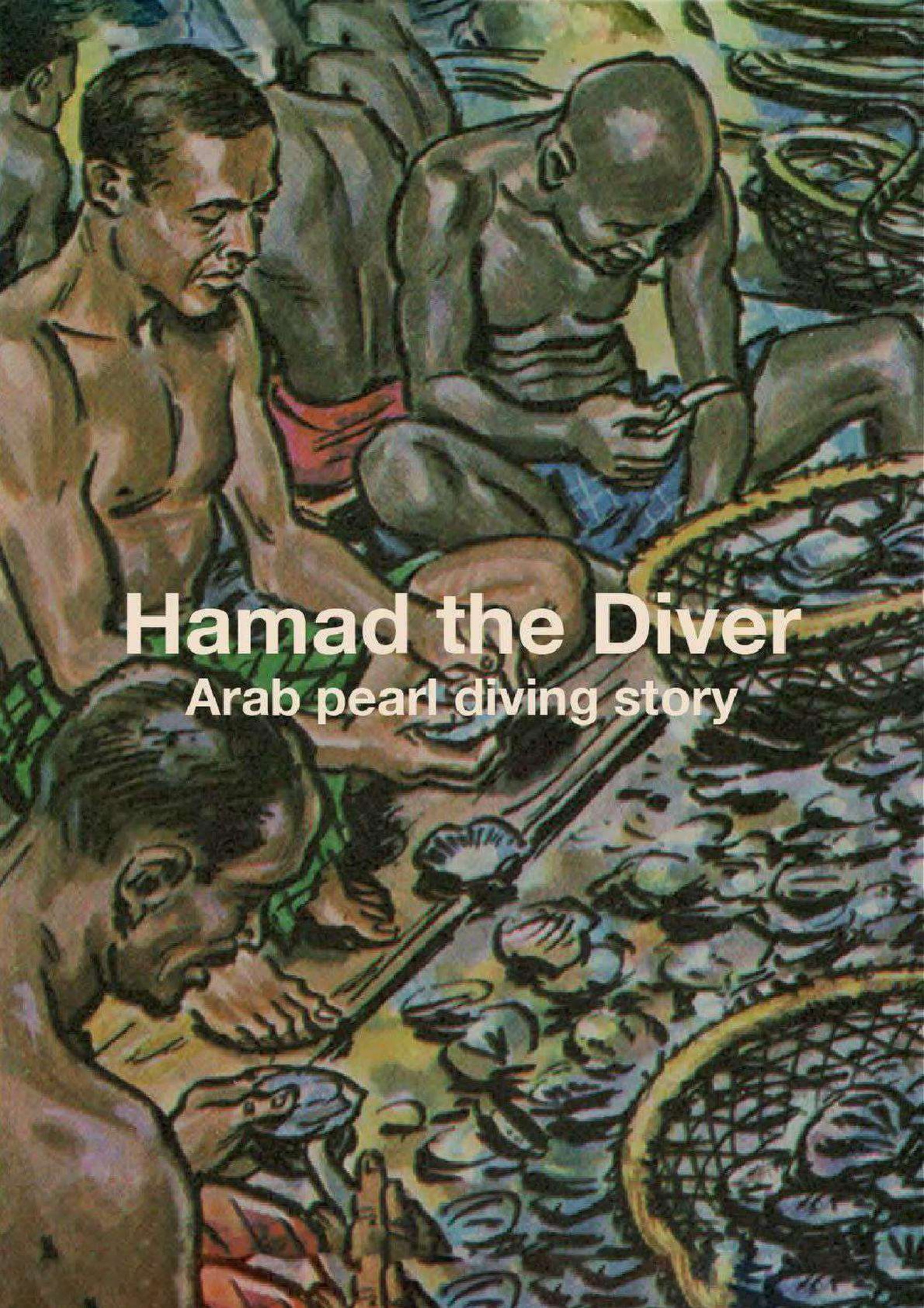
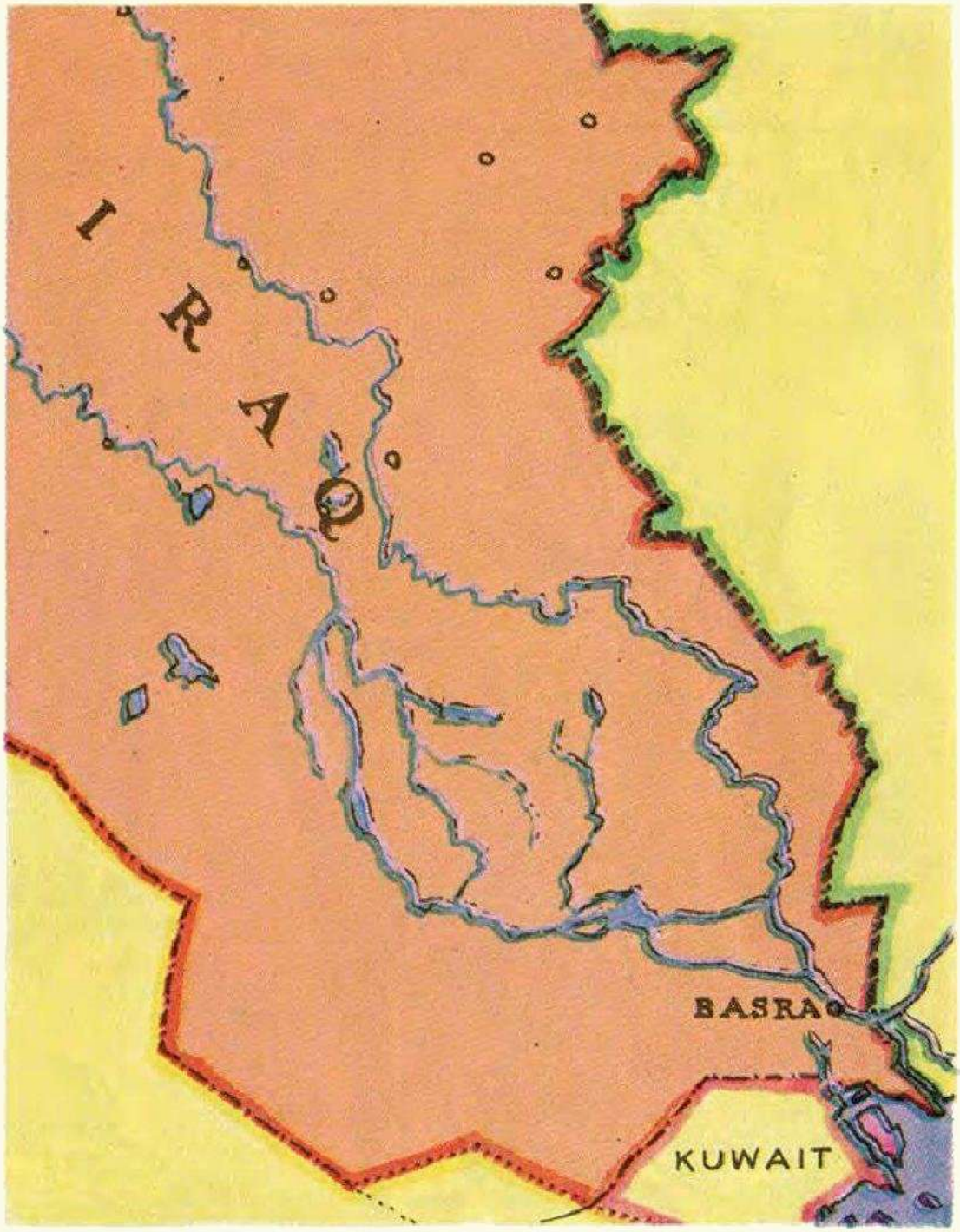
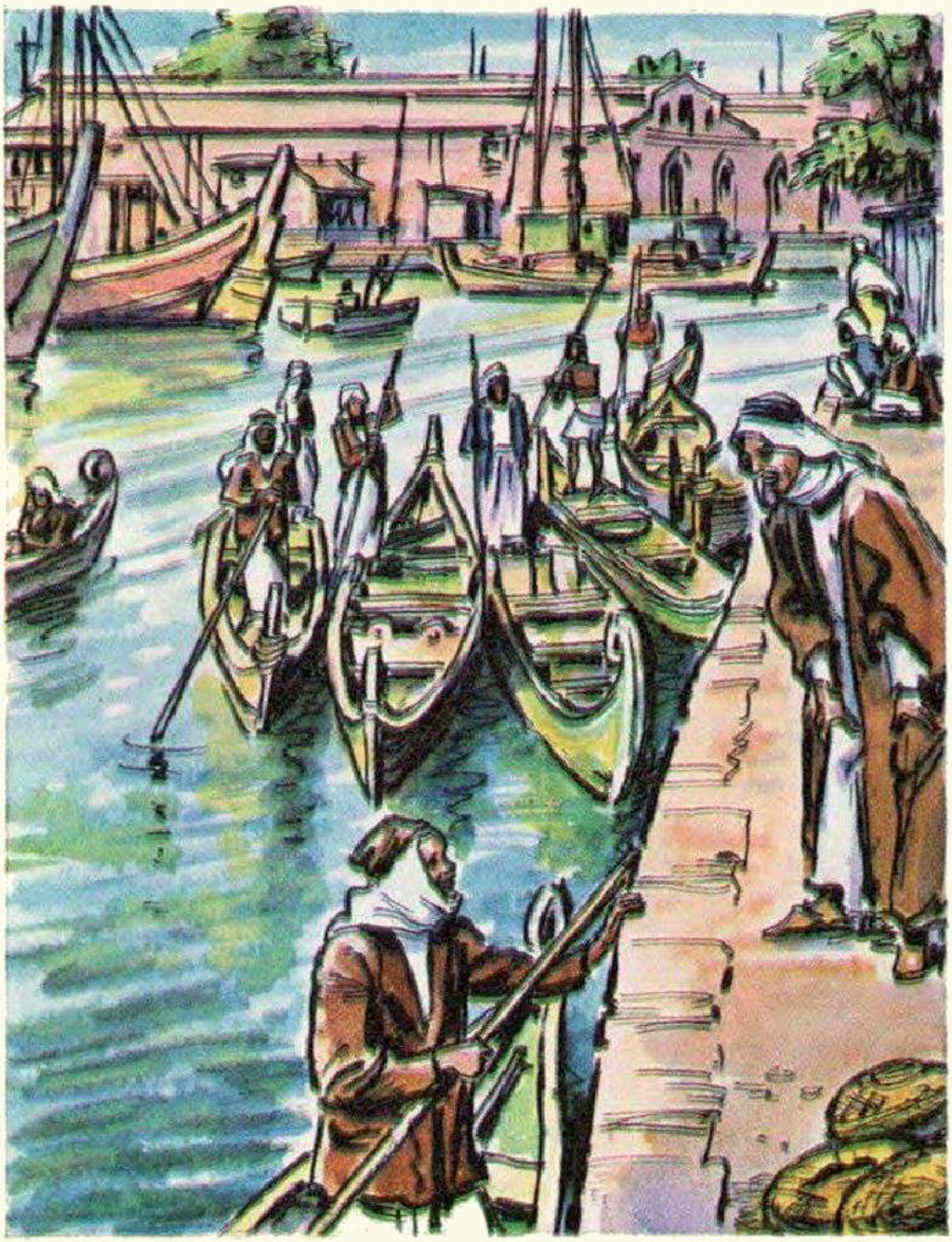

Hamad the Diver
Arab pearl diving story

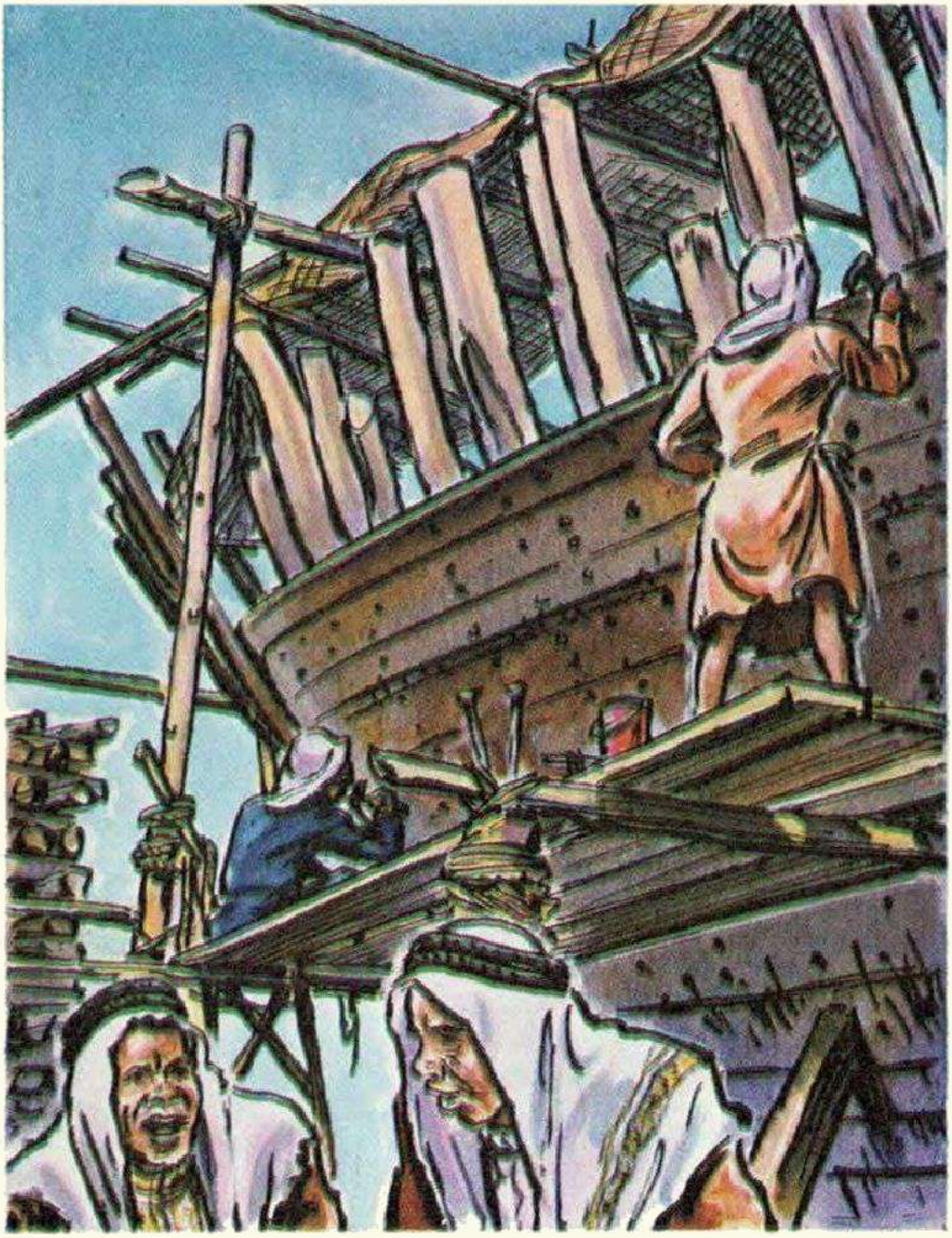


This is a map of Iraq. Iraq is a big country. It has many cities. It has many towns too. You can see Basra on the map. Basra is in Iraq. It is a big town. It is not far from Kuwait.



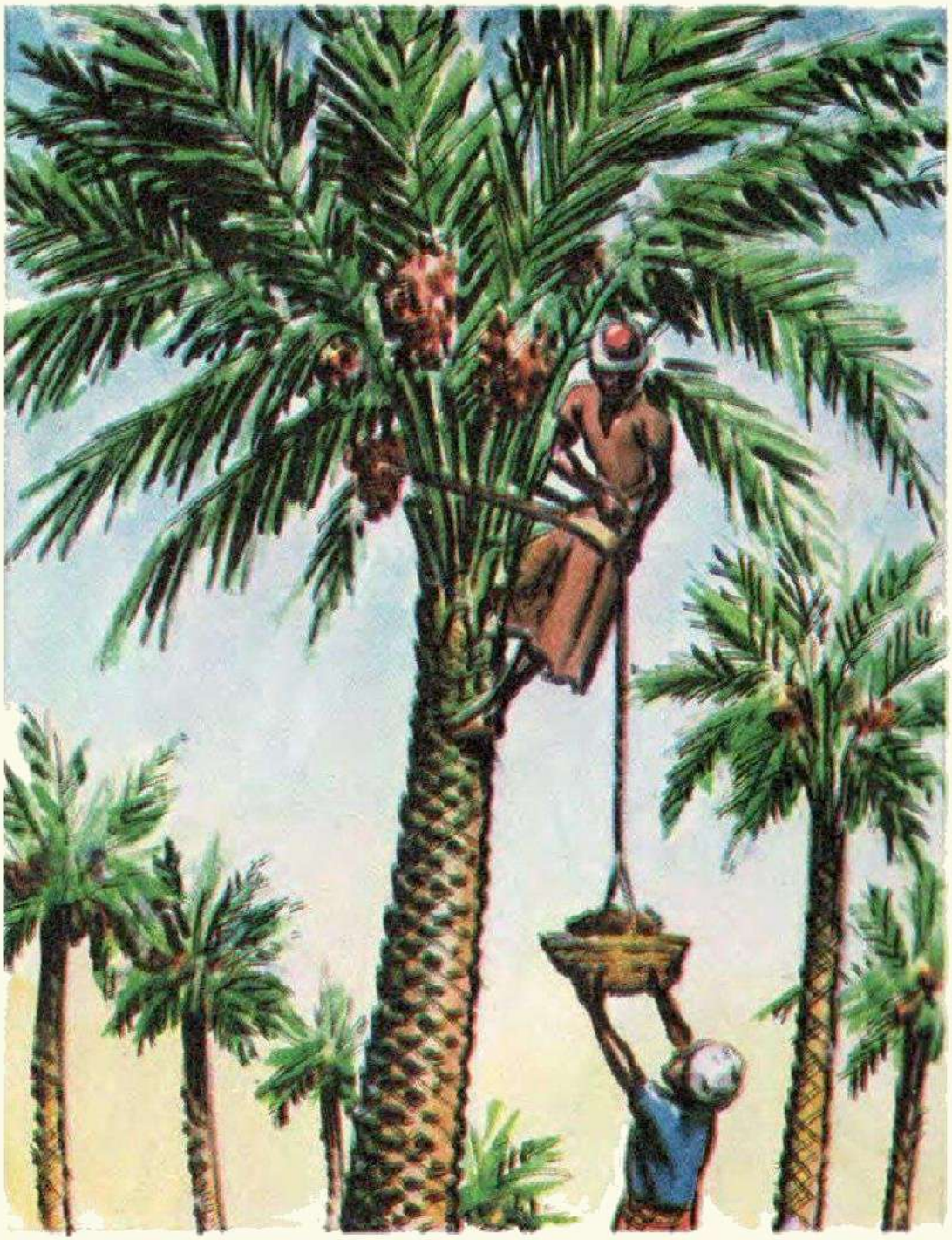
Basra is very near Kuwait. It is not on the sea. It is on a river. The river is Shatt-ul-Arab.

People from Kuwait visit Basra. Some have friends there. Others have relatives. They visit their friends and relatives.

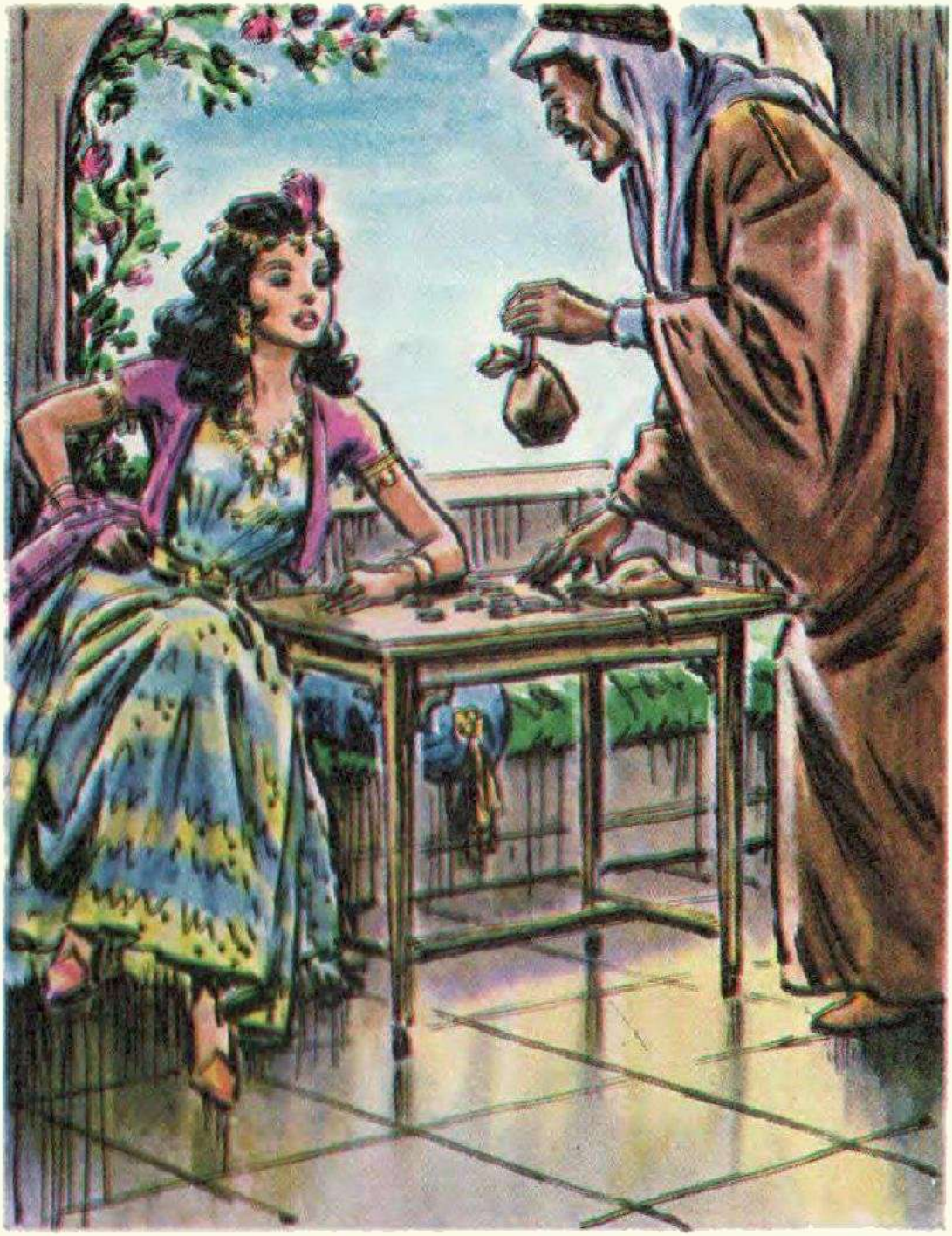


People of Basra build ships. They go on the sea in these ships. People of Kuwait build strong ships, too. They go on them and dive for pearls. They buy and sell things, too. Some of them are rich.

Fatima is a very beautiful woman. She lives in Basra. She has a lot of palm trees. She has a lot of money. She is very rich. She is very beautiful, too.



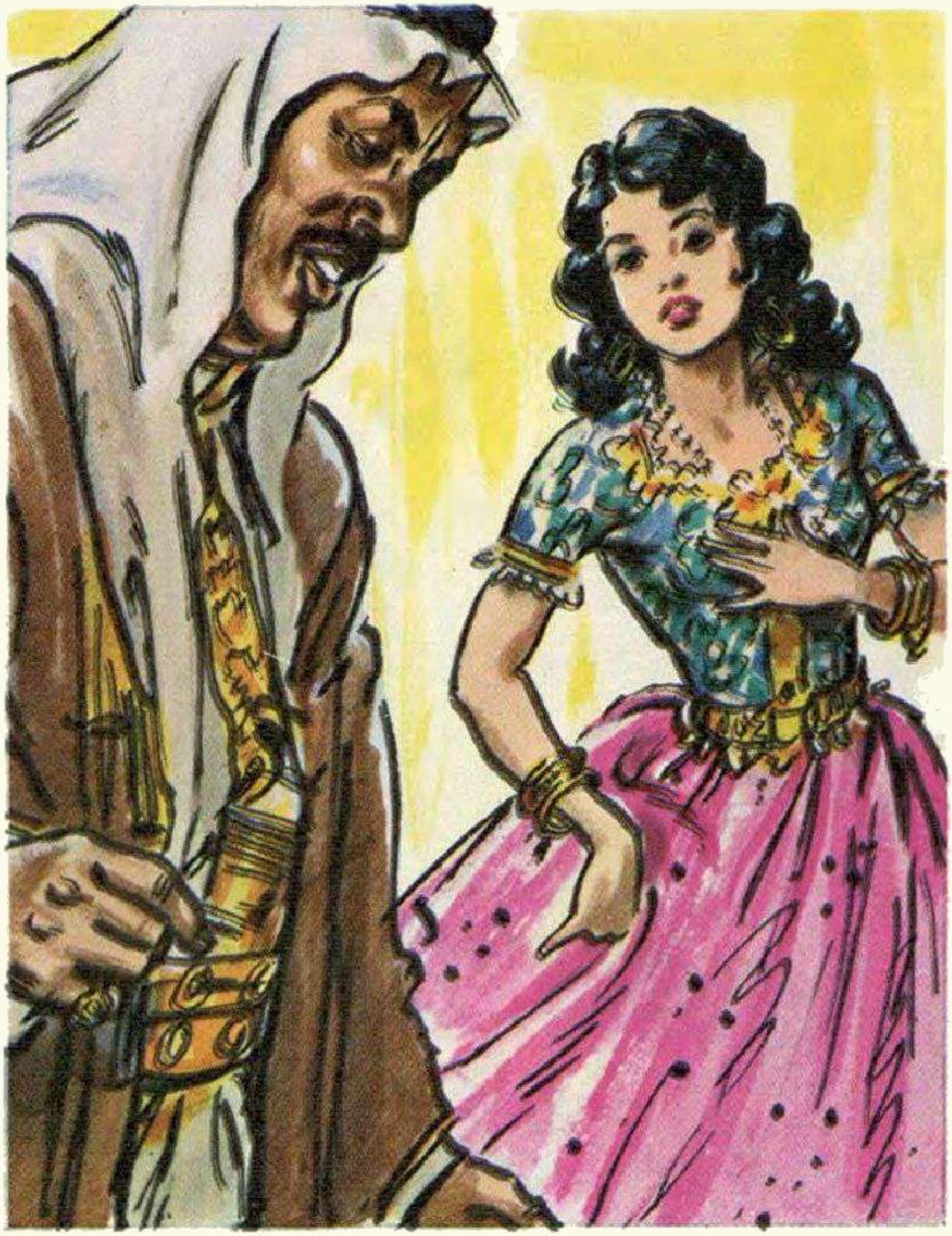
This is a palm tree. A palm tree gives us dates. Dates are very sweet. Everybody likes them. There are a lot of palm trees in Basra. The people of Basra sell a lot of dates. They get a lot of money for them.



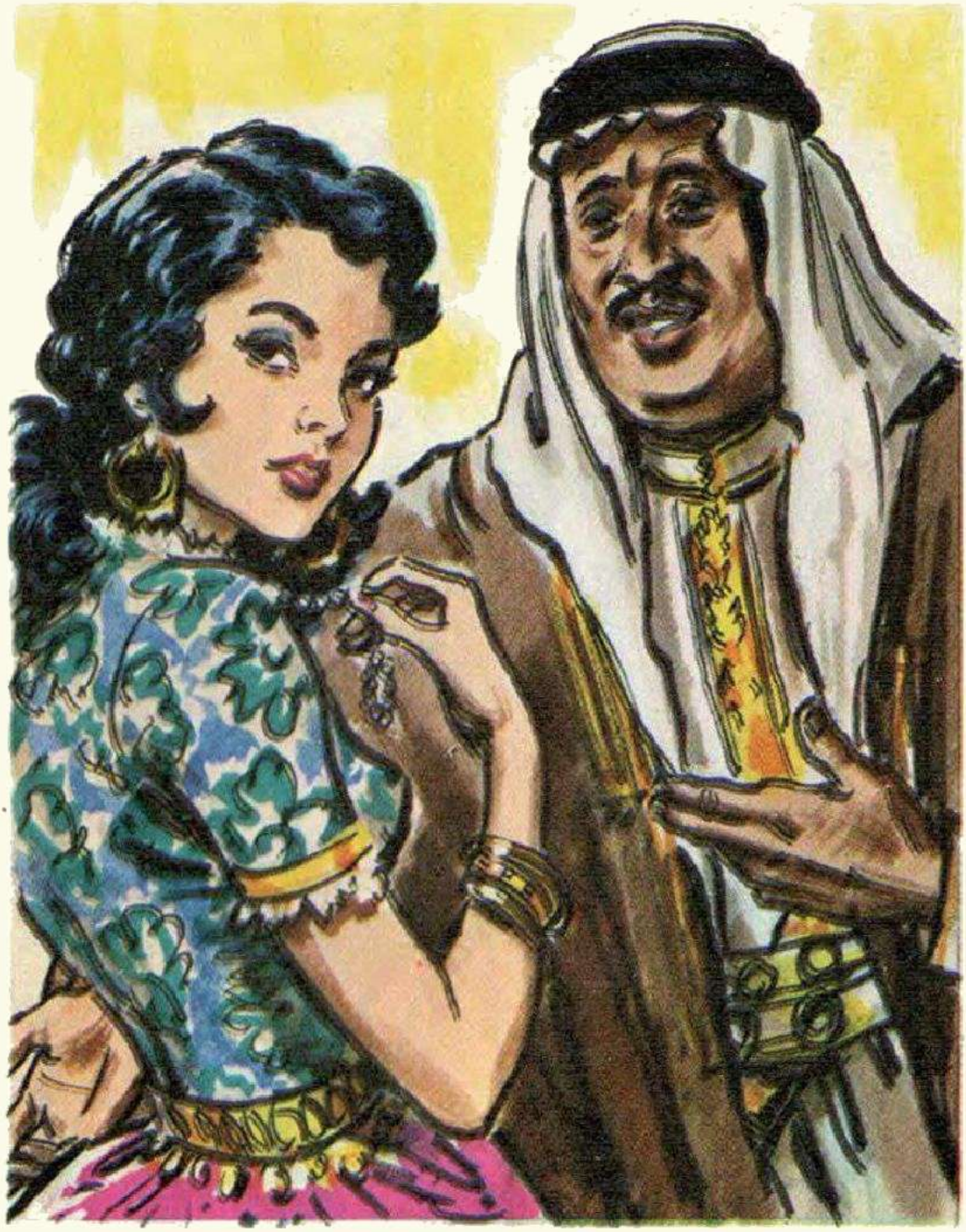
Fatima has a lot of palm trees. She takes the fruit from those trees. She sells them. She gets a lot of money. She is very rich. She is rich, but she is not happy.

Fatima is rich and beautiful. But she is not married. She has no husband. Many men want to marry Fatima. Some of them are young. Some are very rich. But Fatima does not like any of them.

One day her father says to her,
"Fatima, you are my only daughter.
I love you very much, but you are
not happy. You have no brothers
and sisters. You must marry a good
man. Many men want to marry you."



"I don't like them, father", Fatima says. "I don't like any of them. I don't want to marry any of them. I am very beautiful and rich. I shall soon find a man, and I shall marry him."

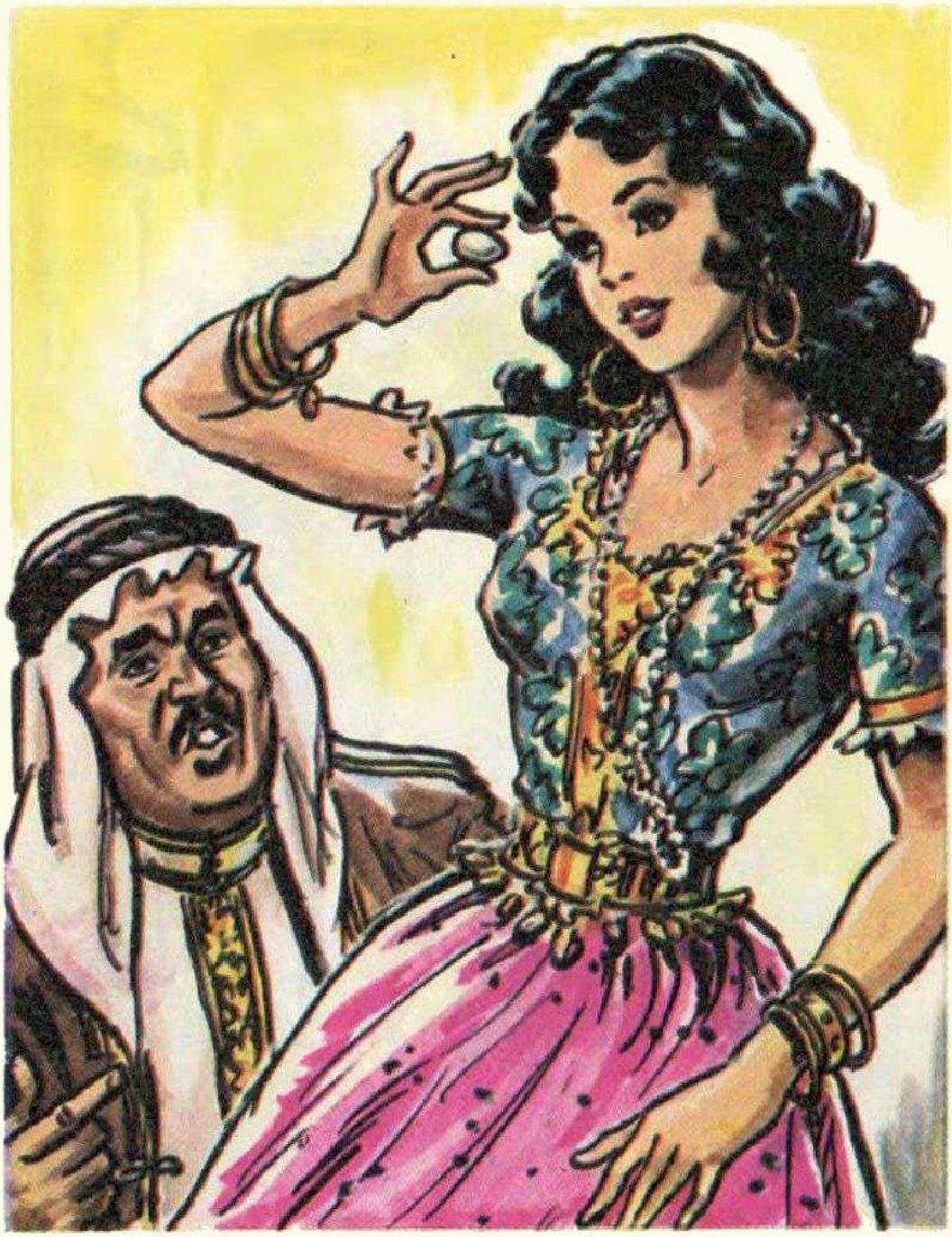


"What sort of man do you want to marry, Fatima?" her father asks. "Many men have come to you. Some are young. Others are rich. But you don't want any of them. What sort of man do you want to marry?"

"I don't want to marry a rich man. I don't want a fat man or a tall man. I want to marry a brave man. A brave man is not afraid of the sea. He is not afraid of anything. I want to marry a very brave man."

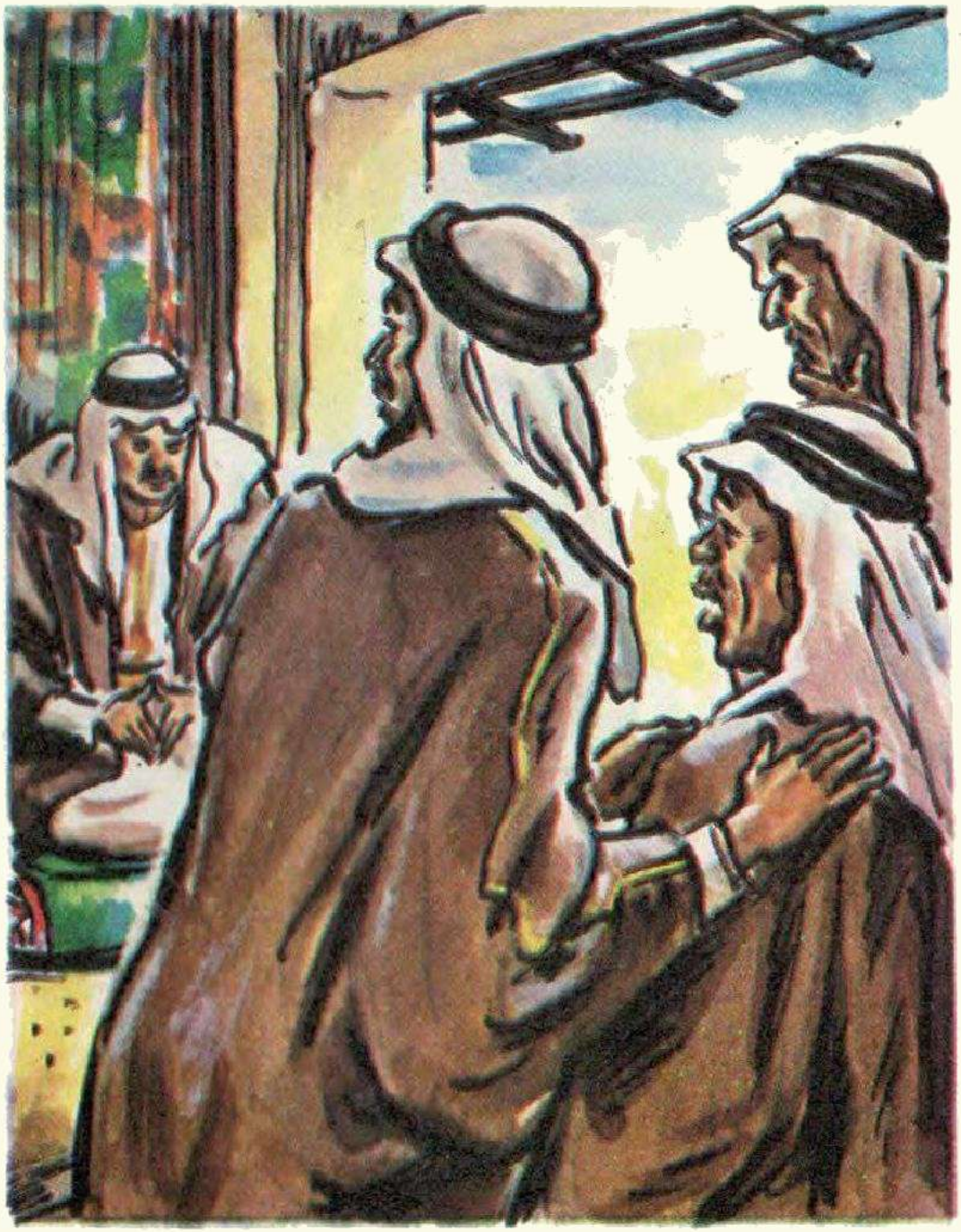
"But there are many brave men in Basra," says the father. "There are many others in Kuwait. There are many in Bahrain and in Qatar. There are many in other parts of Arabia. Don't you want to marry one of them?"

"My husband must be a very brave man," Fatima says. "He must go out in a small boat. He must dive alone into very deep water and look for pearls. Nobody must dive with him."



"Do you see this egg. father? It is a bird's egg. The man must bring me a big pearl. It must be as big as this egg. Then I shall marry him."

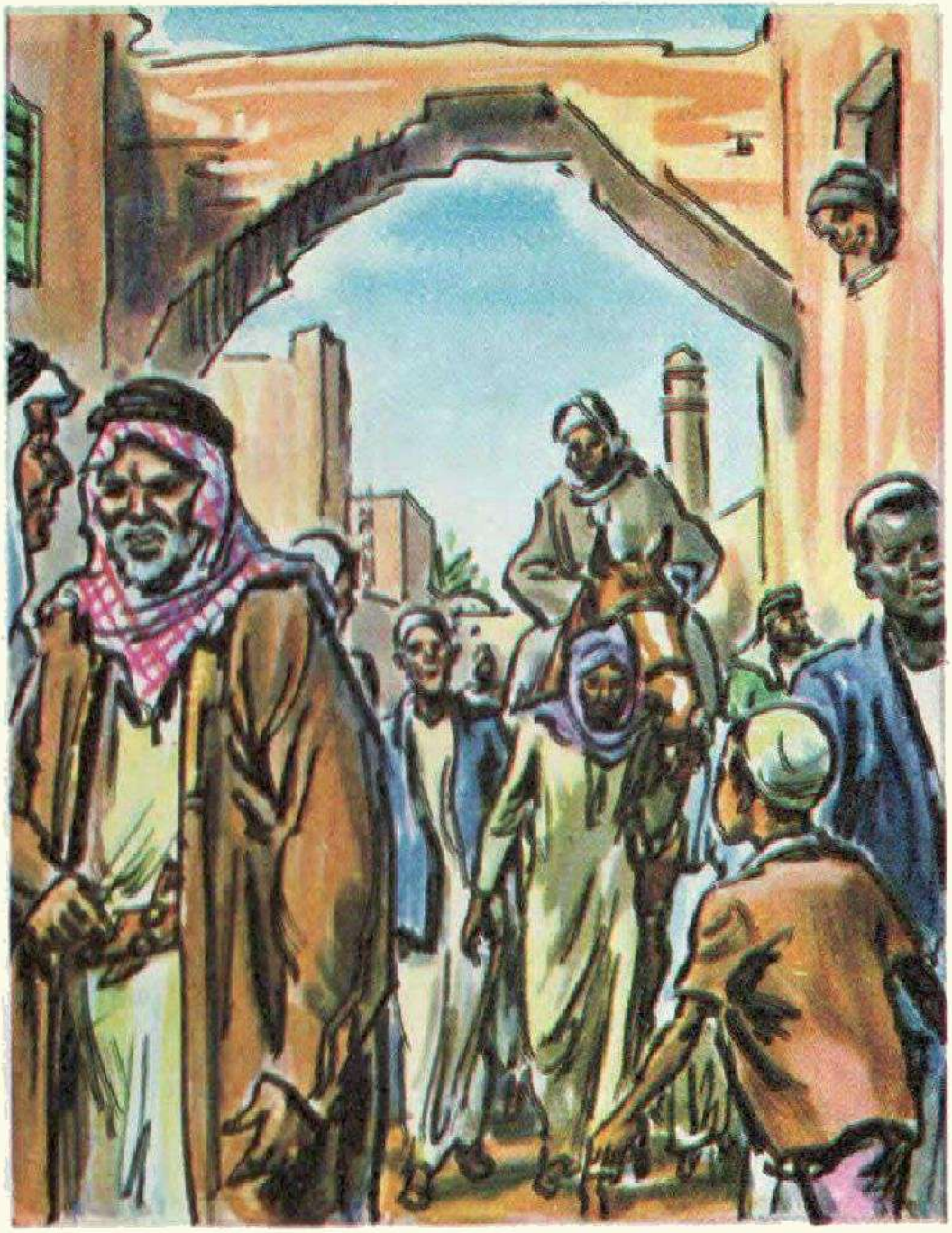
The father goes to the market. He sits in his shop. He is sad. Some friends come into the shop. They ask Fatima's father, "Why are you sad now?" He tells them Fatima's story.



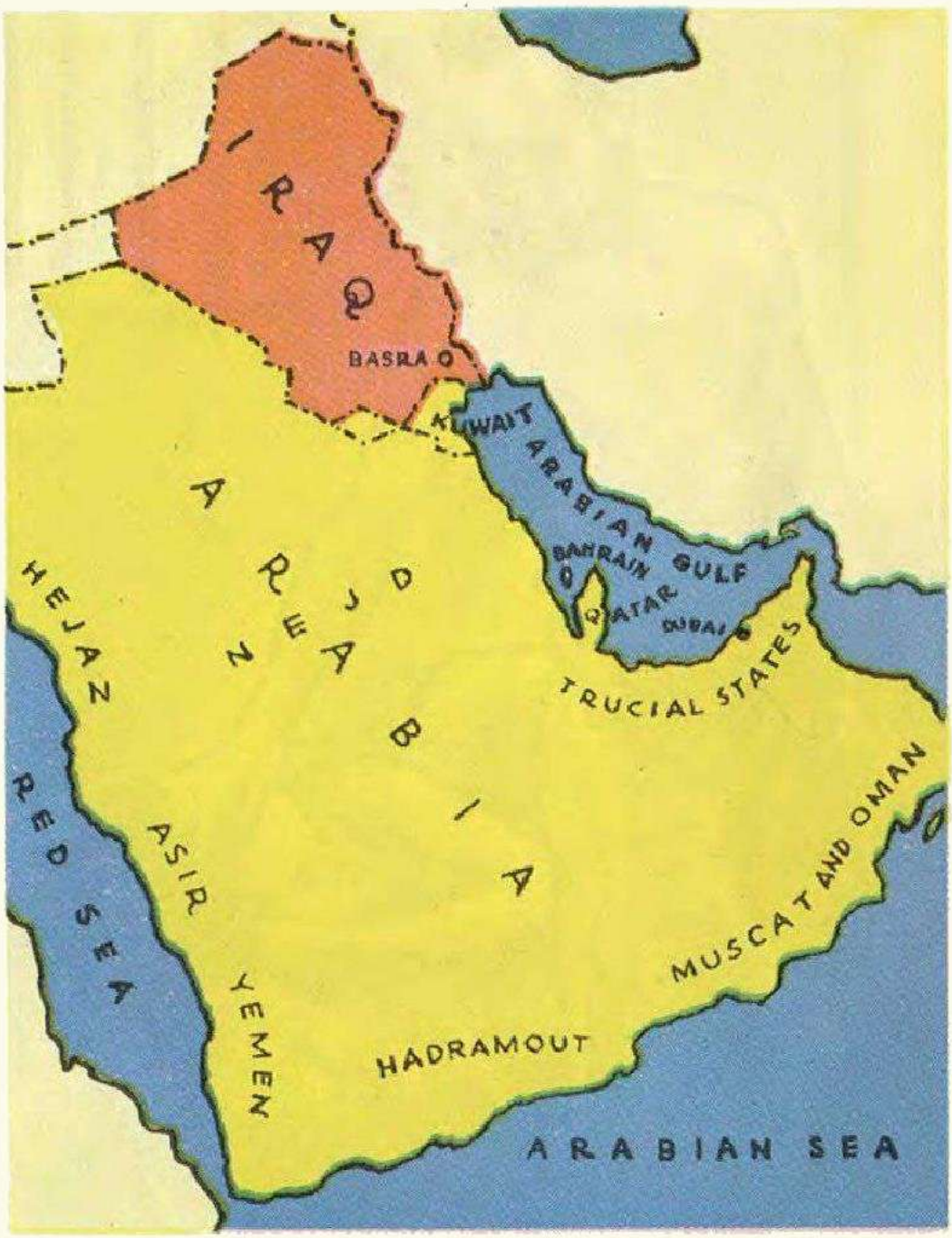
"I am sad because my daughter is not going to get married. Nobody can find a pearl as big as a bird's egg."

His friends become sad, too.

The men go out of the shop. They go to other shops. They meet other friends. They see other people and tell them the story. They tell them Fatima's story. Everybody in Basra hears the story.



Other men from Arabia visit Basra. They come from Kuwait, from Bahrain and from Qatar. They come from Dubai, from Nejd and from Hejaz. Men from Oman, from Hadramout and from Yemen visit Basra too.



You can see all those places on the map. Perhaps you live in one of them.

Men from all parts of Arabia come to Basra. They all hear Fatima's story.